

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, January 1, 1798, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

**TO JAMES MADISON MAD. MSS.**

P, Jan, 3, 1798.

Dear Sir, — \* \* \* Our weather has been here, as with you, cold & dry. The thermometer has been at 8°. The river closed here the first week of December, which has caught a vast number of vessels destined for departure. It deadens also the demand for wheat. The price at New York is 1.75 & of flour 8.50 to 9.; tobacco 11. to 12. D.; there need be no doubt of greater prices. The bankruptcies here continue: the prison is full of the most reputable merchants, & it is understood that the scene has not yet got to its height. Prices have fallen greatly. The market is cheaper than it has been for 4. years. Labor & house rent much reduced. Dry goods somewhat. It is expected they will fall till they get nearly to old prices. Money scarce beyond all example.

The Representatives have rejected the President's proposition for enabling him to prorogue them. A law is passed putting off the stamp act till July next. The land tax will not be brought on. The Secretary of the Treasury says he has money enough. No doubt these two measures may be taken up more boldly at the next session, when most of the elections will be over. It is imagined the stamp act will be extended or attempted on every possible object. A bill has passed the Rep to suspend for 3. years the law arresting the currency of foreign coins. The Senate propose an amendment, continuing the currency of the foreign gold only. Very possibly the bill may be lost. The object of opposing the bill is to make the French crowns a subject of speculation (for it seems they fell on the President's

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proclamation to a Dollar in most of the states), and to force bank paper (for want of other medium) through all the states generally. Tench Coxe is displaced & no reason ever spoken of. It is therefore understood to be for his activity during the late election. It is said, that the people from hence quite to the Eastern extremity are beginning to be sensible that their government has been playing a foul game. In Vermont, Chipman was elected Senator by a majority of one, against the republican candidate. In Maryland, Lloyd by a majority of one, against Winder the republican candidate. Tichenor chosen Governor of Vermont by a very small majority. The house of Representatives of this state has become republican by a firm majority of 6. Two counties, it is said, have come over generally to the republican side. It is thought the republicans have also a majority in the N York H of representatives. Hard elections are expected there between Jay & Livingston, & here between Ross & McKean. In the H of Representatives of Congress, the republican interest has at present, on strong questions, a majority of about half a dozen, as is conjectured, & there are as many of their firmest men absent; not one of the anti-republicans is from his post. The bill for permitting private vessels to arm, was put off to the 1st Monday in February by a sudden vote, & a majority of five. It was considered as an index of their dispositions on that subject, tho some voted both ways on other ground. It is most evident, that the anti-republicans wish to get rid of Blount's impeachment. Many metaphysical niceties are handing about in conversation, to shew that it cannot be sustained. To show the contrary, it is evident must be the task of the republicans, or of nobody. Monroe's book is considered as masterly

by all those who are not opposed in principle, and it is deemed unanswerable. An answer, however, is commenced in Fenno's paper of yesterday, under the signature of Scipio. The real author not yet conjectured.<sup>1</sup> As I take these papers merely to preserve them, I will forward them to you, as you can easily return them to me on my arrival at home; for I shall not see you on my way, as I mean to go by the Eastern Shore & Petersburg.

<sup>1</sup> Scipio was Uriah Tracy, and the letters were afterwards collected in book form.

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Perhaps the paragraphs in some of these abominable papers may draw from you now & then a squib. A pamphlet of Fauchet's appeared yesterday. I send you a copy under another cover. A handbill is just arrived here from N Y, where they learn from a vessel which left Havre about the 9th of Nov, that the emperor had signed the definitive articles, given up Mantua, evacuated Mentz, agreed to give passage to the French troops into Hanover, and that the Portuguese ambassador had been ordered to quit Paris, on account of the seizure of fort St. Julian's by the English, supposed with the connivance of Portugal. Tho this is ordinary mercantile news, it looks like truth. The latest official intelligence from Paris is from Talleyrand Perigord to the French consul here, (Letombe,) dated Sep 28, saying that our Envoys were arrived, & would find every disposition on the part of his government to accommodate with us.